



**IMPROVING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH  
STUDIES USING ENHANCED ENROLLMENT INTERVIEWS**

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**Abstract**

The difficulties associated with recruitment and retention of research participants is a primary limitation of mental health research. We developed and implemented an enhanced enrollment and follow-up interview process to optimize recruitment, retention, and data collection of participants in two randomized clinical trials of Complicated Grief Group Therapy (CCGT). Interviews were conducted prior to participation in CCGT and subsequently six weeks afterward. High levels of recruitment were obtained and attrition dropped from 9% prior to the study period to 4%. Descriptive analysis of post-CCGT interviews revealed that enhanced enrollment facilitated trusting relationships between participants and study staff, increasing familiarity and comfort as participants began the challenge of addressing their complicated grief. The evident reduction in avoidance and our ability to retain participants clearly demonstrates the benefit of in-person enhanced enrollment interviews.

*Keywords:* complicated grief, recruitment, retention, attrition, in-person interview